of Manipur in September, 2004 to synergise security and counter insurgency operations undertaken by State Police, Central Police Forces and Army in the State. Government has also extended an invitation to all militant outfits to give up the path of violence and to come forward for talks. Social and economic development programmes are being intensified. Regular meetings to review and keep a watch on the situations are held at all levels between the Central and the State Government.

Export growth target

*318. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether export growth target of 15 per cent frixed in this year's foreign trade policy has been surpassed in first half of 2005-2006 with exports shooting up to $43.2 billion and registered a growth of 20.52 per cent against last year's half-yearly export figure of $35.86 billion;

(b) whether Inter State Trade Council had its first meeting in October-November, 2005;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to remove export cess on export of all agricultural and plantation commodities levied under various commodity board acts; and

(d) if so, the what extent Government is expected to improve further exports during the remaining period of current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The annual export target for the current fiscal was fixed at US $ 92 billion implying a growth of around 15 per cent over exports of the previous year. Against this target, exports registered a growth of 20.52% during April-September, 2005-2006 being valued at US $ 43.2 billion compared with US $35.9 billion during the same period of last year.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The Government has approved a proposal for removal of cess on export of agricultural commodities presently levied under the Agricultural

and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) Cess Act 1985; Tobacco Cess Act 1975; Spices Cess 1986; Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) Act 1972 and Coffee Act 1942. A Bill for amending/repealing these Acts, administered by the Department of Commerce, has already been introduced in the Lok Sabha.

(d) Export promotion is an on-going endeavour of the Government. Recent initiatives to give an added fillip to export growth include enactment of the SEZ Act 2005, setting up of Free Trade Warehousing Zones (FTWZs), giving a major thrust to procedural simplification to reduce transanction costs of exporters and engaging in greater economic cooperation with other countries through regional trade agreements.

Strengthening the power production and its distribution system

†*319 PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the measures being taken by Government for strengthening the system of production of power and its distribution in different States in the country specially in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) whether Government have formulated any national action plan in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the progress made so far with regard to strengthening the production of power and its distribution system in the country?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) to (d) In order to strengthen the power production from existing thermal power plants in the country; Central Electricity Authority has identified 106 Units of 32 Thermal Stations with a total capacity of about 10,413 MW for Life Extension (LE) work during the 10th Plan. Extension of economical rating life by 15-20 years and increase in generation capacity by more than 300 MW besides the overall

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.